ALPHA KAI OMEGA CLUB

of

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presents

THE LESLIE BELL SINGERS

MARCH 7TH, 1947

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HISTORY
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ALPHA KAI OMEGA CLUB

The Alpha Kai Omega Club of the K.-W. Y.M.C.A., generally known as the "Alpha Club" has been in existence since 1929. At that time all members were high school students. Many original members of "Alpha" are still active, and while this club is not the original club formed at the Y.M.C.A., it does have the distinction of being one of the most active service clubs in continuous service.

During the span of years from 1929 till the present year, many activities were introduced. One of the most successful events was the introduction of Saturday night dancing at the "Y" now generally known as the "teen-age canteen."

Later on larger and more expensive projects were sponsored, the most important function being the foundation and laying of plans for the present boys' camp situated at Frying Pan Bay on the northern tip of Beausoleil Island, Georgian Bay. This project at the time of undertaking was probably the most advanced and far-reaching project undertaken by a comparatively young men's club. Today this camp is one of the most successful and expanding camps in the province of Ontario.

During the war most members were called to the three services and all activities were more or less restricted. One of the most interesting activities that did carry on was a chain letter originated by the remaining members who sent out club items and kept members posted as to where other members were serving in the Allied cause. Over the days and months and years this letter found its way to the far flung outposts scattered throughout the war areas of World War II. Each member who received the letter read with great interest what other members were doing, and also what was happening in their home town. Each member in turn would enter a few topics of his present situation and forward the letter to another member. After some length of time this original letter became quite a packet and had to be taken out of circulation and another letter started. These letters finally found their way into the club files where they will linger and be brought out from time to time to refresh memories of bygone days.

Since the close of the war and on through re-organizational pains the club has once again become very active. Our present project the sponsoring of this very excellent programme is providing certain repairs and boys' work at the Y.M.C.A.

All members of the Alpha Club express their gratitude and thanks to all advertisers and supporters of this programme for their whole hearted support.

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THE LESLIE BELL SINGERS *and* ADULT EDUCATION

Music is, to-day, recognized not only as one of the most satisfying of the arts, but also as a potent force for moral development and for international goodwill. Evidence of this fact is the rapid growth of its position in our schools. Countless young people in the elementary and secondary schools of Ontario are now receiving opportunities for musical development which their parents never knew.

It is important, however, that such opportunities should not end with the school years. Many young people who have enjoyed the thrill of singing in a collegiate choir find, upon graduation, that a fine experience has come to an end. There is a definite need to-day for more choral groups especially designed to meet the needs of young adults.

In the fulfilment of this need, the Bell Singers' ensemble is proud to have played a part. Since its organization in 1939, an endless number of school graduates have passed through its ranks. It is gratifying to know that many of these girls have moved on to take important positions in the musical world, and that the choir itself is now recognized as an important professional unit.

The Leslie Bell Singers have been featured on the Canadian and American nationa networks, on Victor records, and on the concert stage. They have appeared several times with the Toronto Symphony and other international concert artists. Their extensive memorized repertoire, consisting exclusively of specially arranged music in the a capella style, ranges from sacred and period compositions to the modern idiom.

The choir has given over 200 public performances including both Canada and some of the large cities of the United States. At the present moment the choir is undertaking a series of motion picture productions, which when completed will be distributed throughout the British Empire and Canada by the Arthur J. Rank chain of theatres.

* * * * *

We quote from the many tributes that have been paid them:

The appearance of the Leslie Bell Singers on national radio networks and as guest artists with the Toronto and Philharmonic Symphony orchestras have won them international renown. Critics now acclaim them as America's greatest girls' choir. Combining in their work, as they do, the dramatic virtuosity of the Don Cossacks and the feminine charm of the Phil Spitalny singers, they are unlike any other choral group in the country. "Incredibly perfect" one critic has called them.

* * * * *

"The audience could not get enough of them. Mr. Bell is assuredly in the first rank as a choral trainer."—*Hector Charlesworth in Saturday Night.*

* * * * *

"It is quite in order to say that there isn't a girls' choir on the American continent to surpass it."—*This is one eminent critic's opinion of the Leslie Bell Singers in their recital last year at Eaton Auditorium.*

* * * * *

"A study of what and how they sang is better than a singing lesson . . . capacity audiences listened spellbound to sweet singing such as the great artists of Tudor and Mozartian days used to make."—*Edward Wodson in the Toronto Evening Telegram.*

THE LESLIE BELL SINGERS *and the* A CAPELLA TRADITION

It is generally conceded that choral writing and performance reached its height in the 15th and 16th centuries. One reason for its supremacy was the fact that the music of the period was meant to be sung "a capella," that is to say "without accompaniment."

Despite the magnificent work of Handel, Bach and the later masters, something was lost to choral art when, with the rise of instrumental music, the old tradition was replaced by the practice of accompanied singing, for choralism can best realize its fullest achievement in a capella performance. The qualities that make for perfect singing—fine tonal balance, accurate intonation, and flawless diction—these are more surely realized when the singers are "on their own." Many present day choirs, appreciating this fact, have endeavoured to revive the a capella tradition, but in doing so, they have found themselves handicapped. Since the fashion has been for the last three centuries to write almost exclusively for voices with accompaniment, such groups are forced to confine their activities to the works of the early masters, or to some specialized field such as that of Russian church music or the negro spiritual.

The Bell Singers have endeavoured to retain the tradition of unaccompanied singing, and at the same time to explore all fields of music. To make this possible, it has been necessary for their directors to rearrange music of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries in a capella style, and to venture also into the field of transcription—*i.e.*, the re-adaption of instrumental music for vocal performance. In this last connection, the question has sometimes been asked: "Why attempt to sing instrumental compositions when there is so much fine legitimate choral music available?" One might best answer this objection by quoting the eminent English music historian and critic, Cecil Gray, who has said, "The substance of the thought will remain unchanged in translation. It is probably safe to say that nine-tenths of the world's greatest music could be transcribed for any medium within reason without losing more than a comparatively unimportant part of its substance and appeal, and that, generally speaking, the greater the work, the less it will lose."

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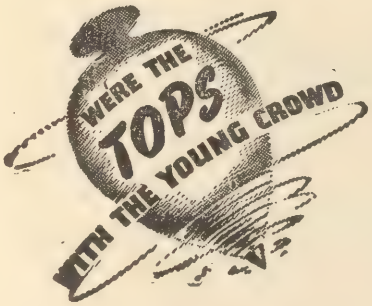

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PROGRAMME

GOD SAVE THE KING

I. MUSIC OF THE NATIONS

1. Folk Song Suite for Treble Voices - - - - - - - - *Bell*
   a. Quebec
   b. Somerset
   c. Vermont

2. Ay Ay Ay - - - - - - - - - *Latin-American Folk Tune*

3. Gentle Annie - - - - - - - - - - - *Stephen Foster*

4. Two Scottish Folk Songs
   a. The Wee Cooper o' Fyfe
   b. A Road to the Isles

5. Rule, Britannia - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Arne*

INTERMISSION

PROGRAMME

II. MUSIC OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO

1. Song of the Bayou - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Bloom*
2. Let Us Break Bread Together - - - - - *Communion Spiritual*
3. Soon-a Will Be Done - - - - - - - - - - - *Work Song*
4. Dark Valley - - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Rittenhouse*
5. Set Down, Servant! - - - - - - - - - - - - *Shaw*

INTERMISSION

III. MUSIC, OLD AND NEW

1. Choral Rhapsody from "The Mikado" - - - - - *Sullivan*
2. Echo Song - - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Di Lasso*
3. Just A-Wearyin' for You - - - - - - - - - - - *Bond*
4. Skip to My Lou - - - - - - - - *American Barn Dance*
5. Fantasy from "Oklahoma" - - - - - - - - - *Rodgers*

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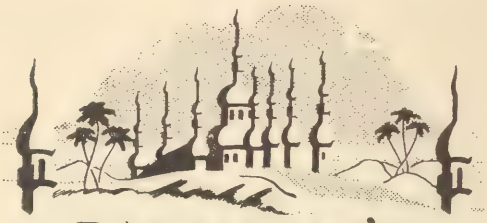

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